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SUBJECT: January 20 MFA Press Briefing: Wen Jiabao Visit to Europe,
U.S.-China Relations, Bird Flu Response

¶1. Key points at the January 20 MFA Press Briefing:

-- Premier Wen Jiabao will visit EU headquarters, Switzerland, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom from January 27-February 2. Wen plans to attend the upcoming World Economic Forum in Davos.

-- As President-elect Obama prepares to take office, China reiterates that good relations with the United States are in the fundamental interests of both countries and are conducive to peace, stability and development.

-- China has taken control measures on the few cases of "highly infectious bird flu," and reported its actions to the WHO, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan authorities, and to relevant foreign countries.

-- 2009 marks the 60th anniversary of the PRC's relations with the DPRK and will be a "year of friendship" with bilateral exchanges as China looks to deepen "mutually beneficial cooperation" and "friendly relations." China hopes tensions will be resolved through dialogue.

-- The MFA provided no information on the case of Yao Lifa, reportedly taken into custody before his planned attendance at an inauguration event at the U.S. Consulate General in Wuhan.

Wen Jiabao to Visit Europe

¶2. At the January 20 regular MFA press briefing, MFA Spokesperson Jiang Yu said Premier Wen Jiabao will visit Switzerland, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom from January 27-February 2, where he will meet with the leaders of those countries and also meet with EU President Jose Barroso. The Premier plans to attend the upcoming World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. The purpose of Wen's visit is to help the international community build "strategic consensus" and "work together" on the Global Financial Crisis. China also seeks to "further enhance" the mutual understanding and trust of the China-EU "strategic partnership" in the new year. While specific details of the Premier's trip have not yet been released, Assistant Foreign Minister Wu Hongbo plans to provide a background briefing on the visit at the MFA on January 22.

U.S.-China Relations in the New Administration

¶3. Jiang reiterated the importance of China's relations with the United States as President-elect Obama prepares to take office. She said good U.S.-China relations are in the fundamental interests of both countries and are conducive to peace, stability and development. The present situation is an important "strategic link between past and future." China has a long-term perspective on the relationship and believes it is in our common interest to promote

the long-term "healthy" and "stable" development of U.S.-China relations into a "new era." On arms sales to Taiwan, however, Jiang said the United States should abide by its obligations under the three joint communiquees, especially the August 17, 1982 communique, and support "peaceful development" of cross-Straits relations with "concrete actions."

Bird Flu Cases: China's Response

¶4. In answer to a question on China's response to the recent outbreak of a few cases of bird flu, Jiang said China has taken control measures with respect to the "highly infectious bird flu," and reported its actions to the WHO, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan authorities, and to relevant foreign countries. Jiang underscored that these were "sporadic" individual cases.

PRC's Ties with the DPRK, Tensions on the Peninsula

¶5. Jiang said this year marks the 60th anniversary of the PRC's relations with the DPRK and it will be a "year of friendship" with multiple bilateral exchanges. China looks to deepen "mutually beneficial cooperation" and "friendly relations" with North Korea. Asked about the DPRK's recent hostile statement to the ROK, she said China hopes that South and North Korea can "resolve" differences "through dialogue," as is in the "fundamental interests" of those on the Korean Peninsula.

Activist Detained?

BEIJING 00000164 002 OF 002

¶6. Questioned about the possible detainment of activist Yao Lifa, who reportedly was taken into custody before his planned attendance at an inauguration event at the U.S. Consulate General in Wuhan, Jiang referred interested parties to the "local authorities."

Update on the Dumpling Case in Japan

¶7. With respect to the tainted dumpling case in Japan, China attaches "great importance" to food safety and public health concerns, Jiang said. China has taken "active measures" on the dumpling case and has been in full communication with relevant authorities in Japan. The PRC supports a full investigation into this case so that the "truth" can be "exposed."

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